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REMARKS OF

GENERAL WALTER BEDELL SMITH

AT THE

NINTH ORIENTATION COURSE

10 February 1953

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Since this is the last time that I will be with you in my old capacity, I consider it appropriate to review some of our accomplishments.

This Agency is a highly selective one. It would be well if you knew the figures to illustrate this selectivity. Out of every hundred applicants for employment in this Agency, all but fourteen are screened out by Personnel before they ever get to Security. Another four or five are eliminated by Security, usually for reasons that reflect in no way on the character of the individuals. The small residue comes to our Agency as part of a career service. Now, this selectivity process is being rapidly reflected in the stature of our personnel.

We now have our own decoration, just approved by the President, which will be given rarely but will mean a great deal to the recipient. During the past year, I have given two such decorations to officers of this Agency for outstanding accomplishments involving great personal risk. The standard of discipline here is high and it is refreshing to realize that we do not have disgruntled employees speaking about the "inefficiency" and the "inadequacy" of their respective services, services to which they owe basic loyalty. Let's always remember that loyalty works both ways and will continue to work both ways in this organization as long as it is headed by the people who are now going to head it. That is the type of discipline, the kind of loyalty, and the calibre of devotion to duty that is necessary in a career service of this kind.

We have, of course, given to the personnel of this Agency adequate facilities for expressing their views, for indicating weaknesses in the organization, and for suggesting improvements. The Inspector General's office is open to everyone, on a highly confidential basis, for suggestions or complaints. As you well know, meritorious suggestions are rewarded with cash or with other recognition. During the past two years, a number of our personnel have given their lives to their service. Regrettably, the facts cannot be published at once nor can the recognition in the form of awards and decorations be acknowledged immediately. That is one of the penalties you pay for serving in a highly classified organization of this kind. The reward lies largely in your sense of accomplishment.



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When President Truman left office, he wrote a letter to the Director, in which he said: "Truly, no President has ever, in the history of the United States, been so well informed and so thoroughly and completely advised in the field of intelligence and foreign developments as I have, due primarily to the efficiency and the accomplishments of the Central Intelligence Agency." In due time that fact will be more widely recognized. It is widely recognized now in Government circles. Now, those things are due entirely toyou. The other day, President Eisenhower asked me to say to the personnel of this Agency that he expected, and realized he would receive, the same degree of efficient and loyal support as had been accorded his predecessor. Well, of course he will.

Our service is to the United States and it is a devoted and a dedicated and a loyal service. I have to thank you, individually and collectively, for the support you have given me. Nobody leaves this organization willingly. You may ask why I did. The reason is very simple. The length of time I can devote from now on to Government service is strictly limited for various reasons. We have reached a point in our development where continuity of leadership is essential. Our organization is good and sound. Our personnel are highly qualified and carefully selected. Now, what we need is a Director who will spend the rest of his active life at the head of this Agency. Furthermore, we need development in depth so that his deputy, another carefully selected and extremely able man, will be able to succeed him. In this way, the personnel of this fine organization will have a long period of continuity of leadership. You are going to have that, and it is that fact, and that fact alone, which reconciles me in leaving. Thank you very much.




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